

UP STAIRS CLUB

Volume 2

October 20, 1959 -- Chicago Illinois An Educational Group

So much news since our last bulletin, don't know where to start...Summer gone and it doesn't seem as if we even had one despite all the heat...My two week stint of teaching at the American Ballet Center in New York during the worst of the heat did not come under the heading of a vacation...enjoyed the school and its staff immensely and it was great being with old friends...LILLIAN MOORE, FERNAND NAULT, BEATRICE TOMPKINS, BETTINA ROSAY, SELMA JEANNE COHEN, HARRY BERNSTEIN, DOROTHY HILL, HELEN & BILL HAIN and MARGE & BILL SOUDER, and IVA KITCHELL. My two classes a day had many excellent dancers in them and quite naturally some old SC pupils, among them KELLY BROWN, JOHN SHARPE, JR., DEAN DIGGINS, CHARLES BENNETT, SHIRLEY NELSON, and RACHEL GILLEN... others too busy for class CARLO MANALLI (singing in an off Broadway show), JOAN PETLAK (Gypsy) and ARTHUR MITCHELL (dancing in New York City Ballet)...also had message from JOHN BARKER and RONNY FRASER but did not connect up with them...saw several shows - Gypsy (fair) - Music Man (very good) - Sweet Bird of Youth (great) - and two performances of the New York City Ballet at City Center... had a delightful week end in Sharon, Connecticut visiting HELEN & BILL HAIN ...two grand people who deserve the very wonderful life they have made for themselves in that beautiful little town...in New York one always meets old friends on the street in the most unexpected places - two that wanted to be remembered to their Chicago friends were GEORGE TYSCHEN and EDDIE BARSTOW ...every other spare moment was spent at the New York Public Library in their wonderful dance department doing research work. Now for the news... JOHNNY TARO (Spiro Pastos) sings especially for you at the "Embers" on north Dearborn - reviews for him have been excellent - remember when he first sang on a SC program...YVONNE BROWN had a busy summer in Hinsdale both teaching

choreographing and dancing in "Brigadoon"...her dancing of 'Jeannie' won success with her audiences and an ovation from the supporting cast on closing night...this fall she will be teaching in Glenview as well as Hinsdale...CAROL HOOVER who did such a great job lighting our last program will again be the light designer for the Lyric Opera Company... KELLY BROWN recently appeared on the Jerome Kern Spectacular dancing with BAMBI LINN...next day the studio was all a buzz over his performance...PAT HEIM and PAT CUMMINGS were home one day before taking off with the ROD ALEXANDER CO., which left New York October 1st for Athens, Greece... they will be gone until some time next spring going all through the orient...AUDRE DECHMANN is also along...on Sept. 13th DARREL NOTARA and DIANE PEARSON were married in Kansas City, Missouri, the bride's home... immediately after the wedding they left for Detroit where they will both dance for David Timar in the Light Opera Season there...FATHER WALSH was in Japan this summer studying the Japanese theatre...with this news SHEILA REILLY rushed to see the Takarazuka Dance Theatre for the onslaught of oriental performances(?)...besides - SC - Hinsdale - Flossmoor - Marquette - Visitation HIGH - SHEILA had added the Dominican HIGH in White Fish Bay, Wisconsin to her weekly teaching routine...BILL REILLY has recently signed a years contract as principle dancer in the Royal Netherlands Ballet...KAREL SHOOK is Ballet Master...wife SHIRLEY and child will join him on one of the last dates of Ballet USA...JIM MOORE also in Ballet USA sent us their London reviews which were all raves...both BILL and JIM are prominent in all the news pictures taken during the performances...the thoughtful postscript on JIM MOORE'S letter to MR. S & C - "Just want to say thank you for my ticket to see the world - always my love - Jim"...TOM POSTON opens in a new play "Golden Fleecing", October 15th, at

the Henry Miller Theatre...JAY DEVLIN had a busy summer dancing at the North Shore Music Theatre in Beverley Mass...PATRICIA DOWLING was featured in the Civil War Ballet in 'Bloomer Girl' and JACK WARNER had the part of 'Itchy' in "Wish You Were Here" for two weeks...JAY also relayed the Chicago news that WINI BOKOR is waiting the blessed event...JAY & CALLIE are now back in New York...Congratulations to Ballet Guild on its recent performance...one of their best in recent years...naturally we were prejudiced to JOHN KRIZA and RUTH ANN KOESUN in STONE'S 'Strange New Street' which they danced to perfection ...LORA ABORN'S music hard to beat...everyone liked the lovely dancing of JANE BOCKMAN - very poetic and a uniquely original movement quality that is mesmeric - and always well partnered by KENNETH JOHNSON...there were others who were outstanding...DOLORES LIPINSKI in ETTA BURO'S ballet "L'Arlesienne" and ELLEN GIMPEL in "Les Demoiselles" and among the men ALVIN DAVID'S "Soliloquy" - WILLIAM MALONEY and ORRIN KAYAN...immediately after the program JOHN KRIZA left for the airport to fly to Germany for a month...he will return in time for the Ballet Theatre broadcast of "Billy the Kid" on the Telephone Hour...and naturally RUTH ANN KOESUN will be there too, as his lovely Mexican sweetheart...watch for KAREN ROSE'S TV Record Shop - to be a new program starting sometime in October...KAREN left Polka-go-Round and JUANITA HEIM has rejoined the group...new on the show is JOHN WIDMER...GILDO DI NUNZIO back from Europe will be assistant to Maestro Donati one of the Italian directors of Lyric Opera...he will also dance in Carmen with other extras. - JAMES MORSKI, KAREN KRYCH, TONI KUTYNA and POLLY HARDING...regular members this year are BARBARA STEELE, ETTA BURO, WILLIAM MALONEY, KAROLY BARTA, JOAN GREEN, PATRICIA DOWLING, RICHARD LYLE, DOLORES LIPINSKI and ESTHER VILLAVICENCIO...the ballet tour will again start after the first of the year with JOHN KRIZA and MELISSA HAYDEN as the stars of RUTH PAGE'S Chicago Opera Ballet...COLLEEN CORKREY will be in "Happy Town" opening October 7th in New York...postscript on BUD TYGETT'S last letter - "travel has

broadened me in several directions", Love Bud...at last hearing he was in Switzerland and soon to return to Germany...another to soon take on a seige of European barnstorming is RICHARD KEMMLER who will go to Yugoslavia with Ana Roje to do Opera and Ballet...Polka shows on TV have spread since the long success of the Chicago show - there is one in New York and now one in Los Angeles - choreographer for the latter "Polka Parade" is an ex-SC student - AARON GIRARD...AUDRE HAYES (formerly Audrey Fichtner) arrived in town with "West Side Story"...BARBARA RICHMOND who was with Lyric Opera a couple of years back is also in the cast ..WALTER CAMRYN will dance "Valse Cecile", one of his popular satires on ballroom dancing with RUTH PAGE at the Opera benefit, October 31st...

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE - Choreographer.

- By John Sharpe, Jr.

Through the years printers, actors, farmers, authors, sailors, composers, producers, lyricists, poets and a host of other groups with special interests and concerns have, for one reason or another, claimed William Shakespeare as one of their own. The time has come, it seems to me, to consider the patriarch of English letters as a dancer and choreographer as well. While we have no direct evidence to support two important generalizations.

First - William Shakespeare was well acquainted with the dance forms of his day and used them consistently in his plays. We often find, particularly at the ends of the comedies, stage directions reading "dance", "they dance", "Jig", etc. Indeed one of Shakespeare's chief actors, Will Kemp, became famous as a dancer of jigs.

Lest we assume that Shakespeare, the author, did no more than indicate the use of dance it should be noted that upon occasion he went into great detail, in either dialogue or stage direction, concerning the specifics of the dance called for. Moth, in "Loves Labors Lost" names a popular dance form of the period ("will you win your love With a French brawl") and goes on to describe it:

'to jig off a tune at the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet, humor it with turning up your eyelids, sigh a note and sing a note, sometime through the throat, as if you swallowed love with singing love, sometime through the nose, as if you snuff'd up love by smelling love; with your hat penthouse-like o're the shop of your eyes; with your arms crossed on your thin-belly doublet like a rabbit on a spit; or your hands in your pocket like a man after the old painting; and keep not too long in one tune, but a snip and away.'

Perhaps the best description of a dance is the reference in "Henry VIII, Act IV, Scene 2; (Sad and solemn music)

The vision, Enter, solemnly tripping one after another, six personages, clad in white robes, wearing on their heads garlands of bays, and golden vizards on their faces; branches of bays, or palm in their hands. They first congee unto her, then dance; or at certain changes, the first two hold a spare garland over her head; at which the other four make reverent curtsies; then the two that held the garland deliver the same to the other next two, who observe the same order in their changes, and holding the garland over her head; which done, they deliver the same garland to the last two, who likewise observe the same order; at which (as it were by inspiration) she makes in her sleep signs of rejoicing, and holdeth up her hands to heaven; and so in their dancing vanish, carrying the garland with them.

This description of dance movement parallels the details of the "Pavan" set down by Arbeau, the dance scholar of the period.

Second - Shakespeare thought in choreographic terms and set these thoughts down in scenario form as dialogue or stage directions.

The most striking and clearly stated example of this occurs in "The Tempest" where we read, "Solemn and strange music; Enter several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations, and inviting the King, etc, to eat, they depart". Three-quarters of a Folio page later we have "...then (to

soft music) enter the shapes again, and dance (with mocks and moves) and carrying out the table." Obviously these stage directions were of utilitarian nature; the banquet needed setting and striking, but it is curious that in inserting a necessary piece of stage management into text, Shakespeare has set down in the first stage direction a simple but quite complete ballet scenario, conforming to all the rules of ballet composition. First, the type and style of the music to be used is defined and stated with certainty - "Solemn and Strange". We are next given the number of dancers, "several", and their general characteristics, "strange shapes". We begin then with solemn, strange music and three or more strange, unrecognizable shapes. The action of the petite ballet is then described; we have a simple entrance, and expository section which explains the dancers presence on stage and a simple exit ending by way of resolution, i.e., ".... bringing in a banquet and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations, and inviting the King, etc., to eat, they depart." A choreographer could easily use these directions to devise one minute of meaningful dance.

We may, then, note two facts: (1) William Shakespeare was quite willing to solve a theatrical problem with dance and (2) Shakespeare was dance minded enough to write simple but more than adequate dance scenarios. In my mind these two observations more than qualify the name of William Shakespeare for inclusion in history's roster of dancers and choreographers. We of the dance may also claim William Shakespeare as one of our own.

OPERA BALLET Walter Camryn

The term Opera Ballet is an ambiguous one; meaning a number of different things. First, we must get a clearer idea of what we want it to mean and how it came about -

Is it Opera Ballet with the accent on Opera?

Is it Ballet Opera with the accent on Ballet?

OPERA BALLET (Continued)

Is it Ballet in Opera with no accent?

Or is it Ballet as a separate thing presented with Opera?

In the sixteenth century the most important of the many types of entertainment in which music served was the ballet. Ancestors of the ballet were the Italian Mas carade and the English Masque. The French Mascarades were used as part of ceremonies to greet distinguished royalty and at other state functions. In these performances the actors represented allegorical and mythological characters, such as the elements, the planets and the various Deities, all united with paegentry and dance in a display of homage to the visiting personage. It was these French. mascarades where entertainment was a primary factor that the French form of ballet was first conceived.

Italy may have been the native home of opera, but when it was transplanted to other countries, in order to flourish at all, it was necessary to take on some characteristics of its new home.

The first French opera was performed in 1671. The Gallic mind was slow in accepting the opera form as it was presented in Italy. They much preferred their own dramas and ballets. Even music was considered secondary to drama and ballet. It was not until Lully began writing operas incorporating the musical and dramatic taste of the French theatre that they began to take hold at all. They were still more ballet than opera at this time. Italian opera companies touring in France at this time found it necessary to add ballet scenes in their operas to music of Lully and other French composers. In one respect the Italians were an influence on the French - it forced them to create their own operas in which the background was still essentially ballet.

With the accession of Louis XIV there was a revival of ballet under Lully in which he did a series of them with Moliere. These ballets became so elaborate musically and scenically that they were just a little short of full operas lacking only the connected

dramatic action developed in conjunction with the musical composition. Lully had a monopoly on the court performances of opera and wrote many operas that, more or less, set the style of French opera, essentially unchanged by Rameau and not completely dethroned by Gluck. Gluck was to subordinate the dance in favor of his composition, using it to enhance, or as part of the story line, growing out of the chain of incidents forming the framework of his plot. This is the beginning of the separation of ballet and opera and its history since has been a series of ups and down, depending mostly on the nationality presenting the opera. The ballets place in opera is a subject long neglected due to our occupation of ballet as an independent art in the present century.

Certainly all opera is not Italian. It can be any nationality and we are familiar with the German, French, Italian, Russian and English operas. In speaking of music generally in relation to nationality Stendahl, the French writer wrote - "The Germans, who make doctrines out of everything, deal with music learnedly; the Italians, being voluptuous, seek in it lively though fleeting sensations; the French, more vain than preceptive, manage to speak of it wittily; and the English pays for it without meddling".

Stendahl's remarks do not include the Russians who were probably not active at this time in opera. However, his remarks musically about each nationality can be applied remarkably well to their use of ballets in their operas.

The Germans use ballet in their operas sparingly and in most cases not at all. When Wagner's "Tannhauser" was to have its Paris debut the French would not have it without a ballet, so Wagner, was forced to write the wonderful Venusberg Bacchanale and he placed it in the prologue, because he said, the audience would not be in their seats by this time. The fact remains, it is a great piece of music used extremely intelligently to set the opening scene, expressing the sensual delights of the Goddess of Love in whose power Tannhauser resides. The opera is much stronger with this bacchanale and when used it is known as

the Paris version. In this ballet of drunken revelry the dancers use the free open movements known mostly as Grecian, it is wild and passionate in character.

Most of Wagner's opera stories do not lend themselves to dance, being too expansive in scope, however in "Die Meistersinger" in the final scene he has used a lusty peasant waltz, rather in the Bruegel manner that is great fun for the dancers and the audience.

The ballet situation in French opera is a different story, When Louis XIV could no longer dance himself, the ballet became the province of the professionals. Moliere and Lully composed comedy ballets of which the most famous was "Le Bourgeois Gentil Homme". Later they quarreled and Lully turned his entire attention to Ballet-Opera.

Just as in Shakespeare's time there were no actresses - in Lully's time there were no female dancers. It was Lully who introduced female dancers to the stage and established the position of ballet in French opera for all time. This French tradition of using ballet has been maintained ever since and is unlike any other opera company in the world.

French ballet is more lavish with elaborate staging and costuming. Today it is not always in the best taste but the opera ballet there still draws the most discriminating audiences with the opera continuing to dominate the dance in Paris.

Most French opera calls for ballet. While Bizet wrote no ballet in his opera "Carmen" every measure of music in the opera is dancible and it is not hard to insert it. The "L'Arlesienne Suite" is usually inserted in the last act which is quite long with many variations of dance rhythm which fits well into the feeling of the opera. Massenet has lovely ballets in his operas - "Thais" - "Herodiade" and "Manon". In Gounod's "Faust" there is the well known waltz in the Kermesse scene and the huge ballet in the Brocken scene. This you saw in the Bolshoi Dance Film last season. Incidentally, the way they performed this ballet was absolutely in the correct style. Delibes who wrote several popular ballet scores did well

by the ballet in his opera "Lakme" with its suite of 5 dances in oriental style. The ballet in all these operas is in keeping with Gluck's basic principles that the dancing and mime is a natural extension of the conventions of a dramatic form in which everything is done to music. The ballets fit in naturally and enhance the mood of the story.

Probably the most elaborate ballet in a French opera is Saint Saens "Samson and Delilah" with several dance scenes integrated into the opera. The bacchanale in the last act is a pagan orgy, sensuous and frenzied designed to influence Samson to unite in spirit with Israel and destroy the heathen temples. The quality of old reliefs of the Philistines and Assyrian periods should be assimilated into the choreography.

Two operas by Gluck which required perfect coordination between the singers and the dancers and were essentially ballet-operas, were "Orpheus" and "Armide". The first performance of his "Orpheus" was in Vienna in 1762 and the plot gave opportunities for the dance in almost every scene. "Armide" composed in 1777 demanded even more dance. Rarely performed, but a great deal is written about the enchanting trio for a Naiad and two coryphees, the tempting scenes. The masques of spirits summoned by the enchantress to entertain her lover and the long Chaconne near the end of the opera.. Too bad we do not have the chance to see these old masterpieces but we can get some idea of how lovely they must have been from recordings available.

(To be continued in next issue.)

ANSWERS TO JULY 20TH QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. Serafina Astafieva
2. Sonia Arova
3. Catherine Littlefield
4. Gaetano Vestris
5. Antoine Bournonville
6. Patricia Bowman
7. Serge Diaghileff
8. Galina Ulanova
9. Tamara Karsavina
10. Moira Shearer
11. Leon Danielan
12. Birgit Cullberg
13. Agrippina Vaganova
14. Adeline Genée
15. Leonide Massine

16. Melissa Hayden
17. Kelly Brown
18. Helene Constantine
19. Edward Caton
20. Margaret Craske

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THIS ISSUE

1. Who was credited with originating the five positions of the feet?
2. The term "ballon" got its name from whose dancing?
3. Who first shortened the ballerina's skirts to the middle of the calf?
4. Who developed the broad high leap or the grand jeté?
5. Who first danced on her toes?
6. Who is credited with the invention of the heelless ballet slipper?

DANCE PERSONALITIES LOIE FULLER.

One of the very great innovators in the dance and theatre world, known as "The Fairy of Light" was born in Fullersburg, Illinois. It was an unusually cold winter, and as her parents lived on an isolated farm, they went into town and requisitioned the only room possessing a stove capable of throwing out heat, which happened to be the bar room. This, according to Loie Fuller (The Fairy of light) was in 1870. She maintained she came into the world with a cold she never got rid of.

I have tried in vain to find Fullersburg on the map - regardless, her story certainly sounds like our Illinoisian climate.

Loie began her theatrical life as a temperance lecturer at the early age of 15 - this was followed by seasons in stock companies as an actress, usually playing boys parts. She toured a season with Buffalo Bill, sang "Faust" at Hooley's Opera House in 1884 and was once compared in a performance of "Camille" to Sarah Bernhardt.

Her career as a dancer began almost accidentally while playing in a play at the Harlem Opera House while rehearsing for "Quack M.D." She desired an affect of mysterious hypnotic attraction and began experimenting with a filmy voluminous silk skirt. The end result was her famous skirt dance. This began her period of experiment with moving draperies and the affect of changing light upon them.

This phase of her life took her all over the world where she was a sensation in Berlin, Paris and other large capitols. She attracted and inspired many artists of her time and many painters painted her and her dances.

From this haphazard beginning of experiment and chance evolved the broken color impressionism that artists like Monet and Seurat became exponents of.

The fame of Loie Fuller, actress, dancer, and dabbler in the sciences, can rest on the fact that she was the first to utilize, if not to invent, many features of modern stage lighting. Indirect cross-beams and variations of direct electrical illumination were characteristic features of her earliest performances. She anticipated and experimented with the use of cold light by use of luminous salts. Her influence is apparent today in every branch of the theatrical arts.

FROM A DANCER'S SCRAPBOOK

"On Learning"

The man who was too old to learn was probably always too old to learn.

Henry S. Haskins

I didn't begin to learn anything until after I finished my studies.

Anatole France.

The learned tradition is not concerned with truth, but with the learned adjustment of learned statements of antecedent learned people. Alfred North Whitehead

"On Knowledge"

The struggling for knowledge has a pleasure in it like that of wrestling with a fine woman. Lord Halifax

Book knowledge is a mere nuisance, it may do for an ornament, but never for a foundation. Montaigne.

It is only when we forget all our learning that we begin to know.

Thoreau.

Ignorance is bold, and knowledge is reserved. Thucydides.

The wise man is informed in what is right. The inferior man is informed in what will pay. Confucius

It is when the gods hate a man with uncommon abhorrence that they drive him into the profession of the school master. Seneca